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SUBJECT: MACEDONIA: PRESIDENT CRVENKOVSKI ON THE NAME ISSUE
AND KOSOVO STATUS

REF: A. SKOPJE 943

[1](#)B. SKOPJE 973

Classified By: P/E CHIEF SHUBLER, REASONS 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) President Crvenkovski is firm in preferring the October 2005 Nimetz proposal over Nimetz's November 2007 framework as a foundation for resolving the name dispute with Athens. He believes Macedonia will meet NATO membership criteria, and that the strategic imperative of shoring up regional stability in the wake of Kosovo status will argue for Macedonia's membership even if the name dispute is unresolved by April 2008. If Athens vetoes a NATO invitation for Macedonia Crvenkovski, regrettably, predicts a "lose, lose" outcome for all sides, including greater regional instability, a sharp rise in anti-western and populist sentiment in Macedonia, sharply reduced incentives for pursuing NATO or EU reforms, and an end to UN negotiations on the name dispute. In that event, Macedonia would pursue a name change in the UNGA. On Kosovo status, Crvenkovski continues to highlight the importance of including border demarcation in any status solution. End summary.

NIMETZ FRAMEWORK AS STARTING POINT FOR EVENTUAL SOLUTION

[1](#)2. (C) The Ambassador met with President Crvenkovski December 18 to discuss the name dispute with Greece and to review Kosovo status developments. On the name issue, the Ambassador said the U.S. position remains unchanged and that we still hoped that, if Macedonia met the requirements for NATO membership, Athens would honor the 1995 Interim Accord and stick with the Nimetz process (ref A). Even under the best case scenario, it was clear that Greece would not be able to ratify Macedonia's entry to NATO, following an invitation, absent a solution to the name issue. De facto, this would mean a Greek decision not to veto an invitation, while withholding ratification until the Nimetz process succeeded.

[1](#)3. (C) The Ambassador added that Skopje needed both to manage its relations with Athens in the pre-April period to maximize the prospect that Greece would not veto a NATO invitation, and also to use the Nimetz process now to lay the foundation for a solution before/before the Greek parliament was asked to vote on ratification of Macedonia's NATO membership. She urged Crvenkovski to consider as a starting point the

differentiation between Macedonia's constitutional name and a name for international usage, as outlined in Nimetz's November framework. Skopje should start looking creatively at possibilities under such an approach, she added.

MACEDONIA WILL MEET NATO CRITERIA, WILL ATHENS VETO?

14. (C) Crvenkovski said he was confident Macedonia would meet NATO membership criteria before PM Gruevski's January 20 NAC presentation. That would give the USG and other NATO allies time to work with Greece to argue that regional strategic considerations, such as Kosovo status, should trump the irrational name dispute when the Allies made decisions on NATO membership.

15. (C) Crvenkovski said he was concerned that Greek politicians had -- through their strong public statements -- given themselves little maneuver space. Crvenkovski was not sure whether Athens was merely bluffing, but he thought it more likely that Greece in the end would allow a NATO invitation to be extended to Macedonia, while conditioning this action in some way with a warning that it would not ratify accession without a name solution. Agreement on a name before the NATO summit was, however, a "mission impossible."

IMPACT OF A VETO -- LOSE, LOSE FOR EVERYONE

16. (C) Crvenkovski outlined what he thought would be a "lose, lose" situation for everyone if Athens did veto a NATO invitation for Skopje. Recognizing that any future NATO enlargement could be years away, the public would feel betrayed by the West for not having stood up to Greek

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pressures. Anti-western sentiment in general would grow, even though the public would know that Greece was to blame. PM Gruevski's populist government policies would further stoke negative public reactions.

17. (C) Motivation for further NATO or EU reforms would wither in this scenario. Even short-term reform targets would be eliminated. Macedonia's leaders increasingly would turn to populist rhetoric. "Alexander the Great" town squares and statues would proliferate throughout the country. Negotiations on the name would cease. The GOM would be "forced to open a process at the UNGA to change the country's name from FYROM into the Republic of Macedonia." It would not matter that this would still leave Greece with a veto in NATO and the EU, because the government and public would no longer be working to qualify for either in the near term.

SEARCHING FOR A SOLUTION -- BACK TO THE 2005 NIMETZ PROPOSAL

18. (C) Crvenkovski argued that the Nimetz framework proposal -- that Macedonia keep its constitutional name but adopt a differentiated name for international usage -- was not a viable solution, since that would mean earlier bilateral recognitions under the constitutional would have to be reversed. Instead, the October 2005 Nimetz proposal, which would have allowed Macedonia to keep its constitutional name while allowing the time-limited use in the UN of "Republika Makedonija" in multilateral affairs, and Greece to use Republika Makedonija-Skopje indefinitely, was the best basis for an eventual agreement.

19. (C) The key to a solution was agreement on preserving the constitutional name and on the use of a time-limited provisional name, Crvenkovski said. This would be followed eventually by full reversion to the use of the constitutional name in all fora except in bilateral relations with Greece or with other nations that did not recognize the constitutional name. The only problem with this approach, he added, was that PM Gruevski, when he had been leader of the opposition in 2005, had privately rejected the Nimetz proposal and had not discussed it with the President since becoming Prime

Minister. Nevertheless, Crvenkovski during his December 3 meeting with Nimetz (reftel) had asked the UN Special Envoy to work on some additional proposals along the lines of the 2005 framework, and Nimetz had not rejected the request.

"IDENTITY AND DIGNITY" -- OBSTACLES TO A FORCED SOLUTION

¶10. (C) The Ambassador argued that a differentiated name for international use would not, as Crvenkovski had suggested, force Washington to reverse its 2004 recognition of the constitutional name. The differentiated name might only have to be used in international fora, such as the UN. Crvenkovski pointed out that the 1993 UN compromise on the name had only required the use of the provisional "FYROM" at the UN, but not in other multilateral institutions. Why, then, the Ambassador asked, not propose a differentiated name for use at the UN only?

¶11. (C) Crvenkovski shifted tack, explaining that a differentiated name imposed by the NATO summit deadline was unacceptable for two reasons. First, for purposes of national identity, Macedonians could never consider themselves "Northern Macedonians" or "Vardar Macedonians;" they were, simply and irrevocably, Macedonians. Second, for reasons of national dignity Macedonia could not make additional concessions. Skopje, under pressure of the Greek embargo, had had to change its flag and constitution. Any further concession would be an unacceptable blow to Macedonia's dignity.

KOSOVO STATUS -- CONTINUED FOCUS ON DEMARCATION

¶12. (SBU) On Kosovo, the Ambassador updated Crvenkovski on recent developments (ref B) and reassured him of USG support for including reference to border demarcation in any final status solution. Noting that we had been discussing with various GOM contacts their contingency planning efforts for the aftermath of a Kosovo CDI, she said we hoped Macedonian border and customs officials would help facilitate the increased flow of traffic at the Blace border crossing in the

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event of a Serb embargo on Kosovo. Crvenkovski was thankful for the update and stressed that reference to demarcation must be included in any status solution, along with a commitment to moving quickly to implement demarcation.

COMMENT

¶13. (C) This was the first indication at the leadership level here of serious analysis and thought being given to constructing a path to success on the name issue. Crvenkovski's ideas were a bit fuzzy in terms of logic, and do not represent any agreed intra-governmental approach. But we found it encouraging that the long conversation focused on the practicalities of the name issue, and not at all on emotion-driven rhetoric. We will continue to press the Macedonian side to offer creative ideas for working toward a resolution when they next meet with Greece and Nimetz this January.

MILOVANOVIC